

pretty good amendment about reckless endangerment of children and that might be an issue that we need to discuss and it was an issue that I was willing to discuss on this bill, Senator Schellpeper, but your friends from the National Rifle Association in Washington decided that they didn't want to talk about that because they didn't get back to me as they said they would. Okay, so let's get the record straight, Senator Schellpeper, on what we're talking about here. And what we're talking about is a philosophical point and that is this, that guns do kill people, Senator Schellpeper, guns kill people when guns get in the hands of other than responsible persons and I agree with the NRA that responsible American citizens should have the right to bear arms, Senator Schellpeper, but where I draw the line is when guns, for whatever reason, get into the hands of children. The single leading cause of accidental shooting deaths amongst children under the age of 14 occur in the home. There have been 35 accidental shootings of children in our state in the last 10 years. I don't know how many deaths have occurred as a result of knife accidents, Senator Schellpeper, I don't know the answer to that. That is not the bill that is before us, but I do know that there is a harm out there that has been identified and I do know that the lobbyists from the National Rifle Association have come into our state and said that you can't trust Senator Ashford because he's got a hidden agenda. And, Senator Schellpeper, you said something the other day that was just crazy. You said to me and you said to this body, you know what Senator Ashford's agenda is? Senator Ashford's agenda is to ban firearms. You know, and that's just pure bunk, Senator Schellpeper, and you know it. And the National Rifle Association knows that but it's just another way of trying to rile people up and to deflect individuals from debating the real issue and the real issue is responsible gun ownership and that's the issue that we need to discuss in this body and that's why this bill should come to the floor of this Legislature. And I appreciate that there are 27 people in this body who are willing and agreed with me that the issue was not banning weapons, Senator Schellpeper, the issue was not banning firearms...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR ASHFORD: ...but the issue is whether or not we are free enough, whether we are free enough to be able to discuss tough issues in this body or whether we are, in fact, shackled by Washington lobbying groups, and I think in this regard there is